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AUTHOR Gieniec, Colleen; Westerholt, Sheri
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ABSTRACT

A study determined whether basal series published in 1993 are consistent with research on literacy development which indicates that children need authentic text that is full-length, unedited and connects content to the reading experience. Pupil editions, teacher's manuals, lesson structure, skills taught, the amount of skill work compared to coherent reading of continuous text, and assessment suggestions offered in the first- and fourth-grade versions of basals published by MacMillan/McGraw-Hill, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Houghton Mifflin and Scott Foresman were examined. Results indicated that: (1) the basals, particularly the first-grade versions, have dramatically increased the amount of authentic literature; (2) teacher manuals remained voluminous but were less directive; (3) students were engaged in coherent reading 50% of the time, compared to 30% of the time as indicated in a 1991 study of basals; (4) skill development was still heavily emphasized; (5) scope and sequence charts reflected a shift in skill development toward strategic reading skills, literary appreciation, and language/writing skills; and (6) informal assessment suggestions reflecting portfolio profiles were available in the teacher's editions of each of the examined series. Recommendations for selecting commercially produced reading materials include: form a committee of teachers, administrators, and parents to assess literacy expectations and materials selection; look beyond packaging to see if authentic literature is used; examine the teacher's manual for usefulness and practicality; see whether assessment measures are testing-oriented or performance-based; and pilot the two final choices. (Contains 10 references, 19 tables, and 6 figures of data; profiles of the basal series are attached.) (RS)

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A New Look: Basals of the Nineties

Colleen Gieniec
Sheri Westerholt
William Paterson College
CIRL 627 Research in Reading
Spring Semester 1994
Dr. Joan Feeley
William Paterson College

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A New Look: Basals of the Nineties

Gieniec, Colleen
Westerholt, Sheri

May, 1994

Abstract

This study sought to determine if currently published basal series are consistent with current research on literacy development. Findings of this study were compared with a similar study conducted by Hudak-Huelbig, Kayes, McClane, & Stellingwerf (1991). The series used in this study were published in 1993 by the following companies: Scott Foresman (SF), MacMillan/McGraw-Hill (MM), and Houghton Mifflin (HM). The 1993 edition of Harcourt Brace Jovanovich (HBJ) was used for the fourth reader, while the 1995 edition of HBJ was used for the first reader. Major components of the first and fourth reader basal publications (teacher's editions, student anthologies, skill practice books, journals, and spelling programs) were examined and the following conclusions were reached:

1) There is a dramatic increase in the amount of authentic literature used in the examined basal series, particularly in the first readers. In the 1989 SF first reader all the selections were created by the publisher. In the 1993 SF edition one hundred percent of the stories are original text. All of the examined series are moving toward authentic literature by award winning authors and illustrators. Selections are arranged by themes.

2) Teacher editions remain voluminous but are less directive. Teacher options for critical thinking, problem solving, and literature extension activities are the main frame of the teacher's editions.

3) Students are engaged in coherent reading 50% of the suggested reading time. In 1991, students were still engaged in continuous reading less than 30% of the reading time.There is still a heavy emphasis on skill development. On the average, there are two pages of student text for every skill page.

4) The scope and sequence charts reflect a shift in skill development. Strategic reading skills, literary appreciation, and language/writing skills account for nearly half of the skills listed for the first and fourth readers. These kinds of skills were not listed in the 1991 study.

5) Informal assessment suggestions reflecting portfolio profiles are available in the teacher's editions of each of the examined series.

Guidelines for schools and districts to use when selecting a basal are suggested.

Are the publishers of basal reading series keeping up with the current trends and issues in reading research? Research has found that readers need a top-down, whole language approach to make meaning from what they are reading (Weaver, 1988). In the past, many basal series were skill oriented, using a bottom-up approach. They offered the children created stories with unnatural vocabulary and no real meaning. Research indicates that children need authentic text that is full length, unedited and connects content to the reading experience (Goodman, Shannon, Freeman, & Murphy, 1988).

Rationale

Most school systems continue to use basal reading series and spend millions of dollars on these series. Goodman et al. (1988), estimate that at least 90% of all classrooms in the United States use basal programs to teach reading. They also suggest that 75% to 90% of the instructional time devoted to reading is occupied with materials from basal reading programs. Publishers claim every child will read if the prescriptive teacher's manuals are followed. Every parent, teacher, administrator and school system should become familiar with the current findings in reading research so as to become better evaluators of commercially produced reading materials. Anyone viewing these new series are

sure to comment on the brightly colored, multifaceted programs that each of the publishers offers. But, one needs to look beneath the colorful covers to see if there is authentic, meaningful text with which the students can relate. Many teachers and school districts still feel that a basal series is necessary because it "tells" the teacher what activities should be done with each story and it also "teaches" the necessary skills that each publisher has determined to be appropriate at a given grade level. Naturally, this skill emphasis results in pages of skill and drill practice that children do instead of continuous real reading. Teacher's manuals tend to be voluminous, often "talking down" to teachers.

Aware of the criticisms about basals expressed in the 1980's (for example, inconsequential, written-for-the-basal pupil editions; compendious, prescriptive teacher's manuals that belittled teachers' intelligence; and myriads of skill activities in workbooks and practice pads), Hudak-Huelbig, Keyes, McClane, and Stellingwerf (1991) conducted a content analysis of sample stories from the first and fourth grade pupil editions, teacher's manuals, and skill materials found in seven popular basals. Since only the 1989 editions were available, at that time, the results would not hold for current editions (which may certainly have been affected by studies like this one), but the process was valuable. They clearly learned that "all basals are not the same" (Wepner & Feeley, 1993).

As for the teacher's manuals, they were large and cumbersome. For the first grade pupil editions (books used after the primers), the teacher's manuals ran from 368 to 553 pages. For the fourth grade pupil editions, the manuals went from a low of 672 pages to a whopping 1035 pages! In language, they tended to be didactic, often putting words into the teachers mouth: "Now say to the children,'What do you think this story will be about? Next, ask them to discuss the picture on p.-.'" Teacher's manuals should provide a wide variety of suggestions to empower the teacher to decide what the students' needs are in that particular classroom. Teachers should not be expected to cover every minute detail in the manual but instead use it as a spring board to encourage reading and thinking skills within the class.

Since the most important part of any basal is the content of the books the students read, Hudak-Huelbig et al. (1991) looked closely at the sources for the selections. Were they taken from good children's literature? If so, were they excerpted or adapted to fit readability formulas or skill work to be taught through the piece? Or were they created specifically for the basal? On the average, more than half of the stories were not literature but simple text created by technicians. Of those pupil editions with literature (one had all of its selections created), large percentages (in some cases a third) of the stories were adapted or excerpted. Not one whole piece of literature was found in any book.

There was much more original source literature in the fourth grade book. Over 80% came from outside sources. Still, there were no full length pieces, just excerpts and suggestions in the teacher's manuals for other related titles.

Avid readers are what we expect our youth to become. Sometimes the stories in the basal readers are the only stories students come across. Therefore publishers need to include full length pieces by authors that are well known and have meaningful and interesting stories for the children to read. Another important aspect to think about is, "Has the author written other books that the children will be interested in reading and are they readily available?" A library of trade books along with a basal series is of vital importance for today's young readers. Basal stories should leave the students wanting more.

Also, Hudak-Huelbig et al. (1991) counted the amount of skillwork students reading these books could be asked to do for each piece. They counted the number of pages students read from the pupil edition (defined as coherent reading) and the number of skill pages that went with them. Generally, first graders could be doing one skill sheet for every page of coherent reading. Fourth graders could be doing one skill sheet for every one to two pages of coherent reading. In addition, they counted the number of skills the basals addressed for these two levels. For the first grade, the numbers went from a low of 30 to a high of 98; for the fourth grade, they went from 37 to 130. Clearly,

basals can be more or less skill-dominated, and this factor should be considered during the selection process.

Purpose

This study sought to determine if the basals published in the 1990's would be different from the 1989 versions studied by Hudak-Huelbig et al.(1991), we looked closely at the first and fourth grade basals most recently published by four companies MacMillan/McGraw-Hill (MM), Harcourt Brace Jovanovich (HBJ), Houghton Mifflin (HM), and Scott Foresman (SF) and asked similar questions. All of these series are currently in use in local school districts. (See Appendix for specific information on these four basals).

We looked at (1) the content of the pupil editions to see if it was real literature; (2) the teacher's manuals; (3) the lesson structure; (4) the skills taught; (5) the amount of skill work as compared to coherent reading of continuous text; (6) and assessment suggestions offered in the new basals.

There are a wide variety of instructional materials available from publishing companies. (See Appendix for a more detailed description of available resources). For purposes of this study the teacher's manual, student anthology, journals, student practice books, and spelling programs were explored in

depth.

The results will be reported as answers to the specific questions raised; findings will be discussed generally and compared with those of the Hudak-Huelbig et al. (1991).

Question 1: To what extent do basals use original literature in their student texts?

To answer this question, first and fourth grade student anthologies were examined. The acknowledgement pages, table of contents, and original sources were carefully looked at to determine the amount of original, excerpted, adapted or created literature in the first and fourth grade student anthologies. Original literature is defined as stories, poems, articles, and plays reprinted exactly from the primary source. Excerpted materials contain an abridged version of the original text. Adapted literature is changed to accommodate vocabulary considerations for readability purposes. Created literature is written specifically for the basal reader according to readability formulas. The stories were counted and the numbers of each of the categories were converted into percentages.

In examining the student anthologies, it was determined there were between 14 to 22 stories in the first reader and between 43 to 84 stories in the fourth reader. Three of the four series at the fourth reader were consistent in the total number

of stories. They ranged from 43 to 46 stories. SF, with 84 stories seemed very inconsistent with the others. At the fourth level, SF includes five student anthologies with 12 to 16 stories each. The stories are shorter in length than selections contained in the other three series. Consequently, the amount of coherent reading in SF is comparable to the other three series.

According to Figure 1, at the first grade level in all four reading series, 84% to 100% of the stories were original text. HM used 100% real literature at this level. SF and MM used 7% and 14% respectively of created literature. HBJ had 11% excerpted materials and 5% adapted. It is obvious that a major shift has occurred in the 1990's to include more original literature.

Compared to the 1991 study by Hudak-Huelbig et al. (1991), SF had 100% created text and now 93% is original. While in 1991, HM, HBJ, and MM had only 6%-7% original text in the first grade reader the current editions have more than 84% original literature. Created text is now virtually nonexistent in the most recent basal series. In the 1991 study, HBJ had nearly 50% adapted text and today has only 5% adapted materials (see Figure 1).

Figure 2 reveals HM and MM have the highest percentages of original literature at the fourth grade level. With the exception of HM all materials were either original or excerpted, only HM had a created story. There are a slightly higher number of

Figure 1
Literature for First Reader in Four Basal Series

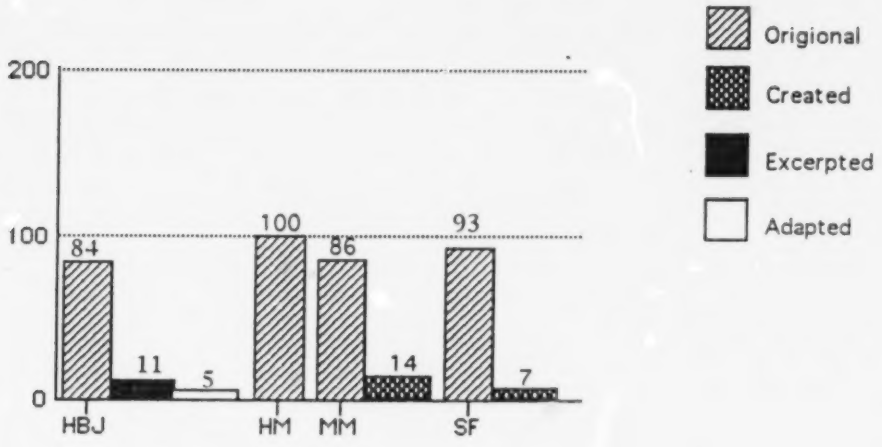
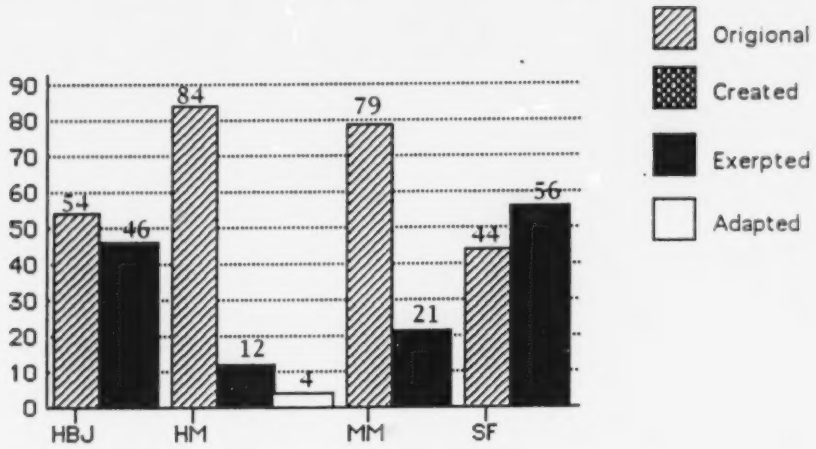


Figure 2
Literature for Fourth Reader in Four Basal Series



excerpted stories than original stories in HBJ and SF.

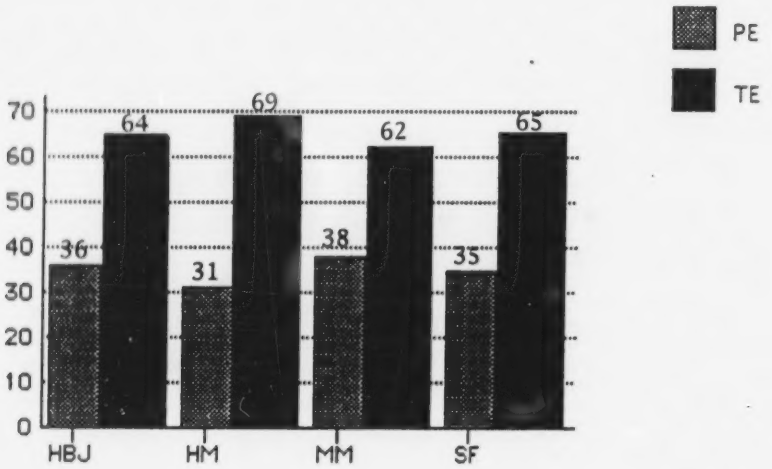
Compared to the Hudak-Huelbig et al.(1991) study, HM, MM, and HBJ show an increase in original text while SF shows a slight decrease. Created specifically for and adapted materials have been eliminated from all the series except HM.

Although a large number of excerpted stories appear in HBJ and SF it still seems to be consistent with the trend towards original literature. In many cases, original sources would be too extensive to include in a student anthology. Therefore the excerpted selections are appropriately included. Overall, most of the content of these current student anthologies is original (unadapted) or excerpted authentic material written by known authors.

Question 2: How voluminous and directive are the Teacher's Manuals?

To determine how voluminous teacher's manuals were, the total number of student text pages were compared to the number of pages in the teacher's manual for the first and last stories of each series. The pages counted in the teacher's manual and the student text were combined and the percentages of student text versus teacher manual pages were determined (see Figure 3).

Figure 3
The Number of Pages in the PE Compared to the Number of Pages in the TE in the First Reader



At the first grade level the percentage of pages for the student text ranged from 31% to 38%. The percentage of pages for the teacher's manuals ranged from 62% to 69%. Broadly stated, there are two pages in the teacher's manuals for every one page of student text.

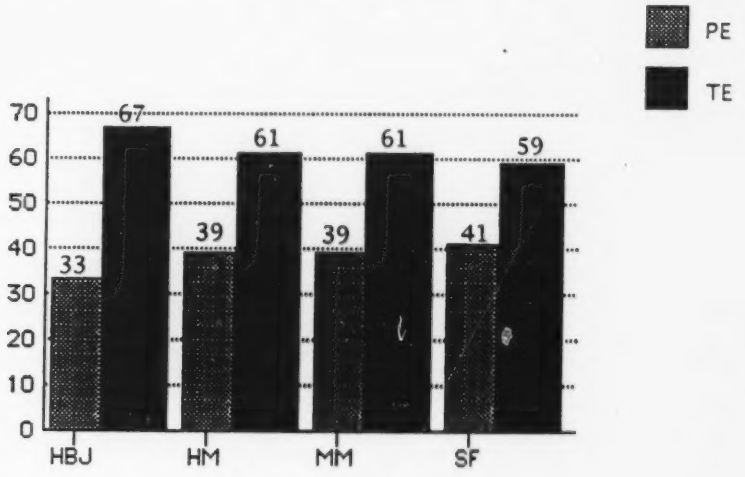
At the fourth grade level the percentage of pages for the student text ranged from 33% to 41%. The percentage of pages for the teacher's manuals ranged from 59% to 67%. Broadly stated, there are approximately one and a half to two pages in the teacher's manual to every single page in the student text (see Figure 4).

To determine how directive the teacher's manuals were, they were scrutinized for suggestions, language, and annotations.

The bulk of the guides consist of detailed plans for each lesson, a poetry selection, an author or illustrator study, multicultural perspectives, suggestions for special needs students, content area integration, a variety of assessment procedures, and strategic reading dialogues. The plans include a miniaturized version of the student text. Some series include a picture of practice book pages, journals and spelling programs, while others only give the page numbers.

While previous series generally presented a scripted teacher student dialogue, the present basals replace this with strategic

Figure 4
The Number of Pages in the PE Compared to the Number of Pages in the TE at the Fourth Reader



reading and writing Think Alouds. According to May (1990) Think Alouds are the modeling of the metacognitive processes by an able reader. There are many more valuable writing experiences offered in the manuals. Also found are numerous trade book suggestions and bibliographies of related books. Activities and projects related to literature permeate the pages of the manual. While manuals remain lengthy they appear to offer creative reading and writing suggestions.

Question 3: How are lessons structured?

The lesson format in each teacher's manual was examined. Headings and subheadings were developed to indicate how each series presents lessons (see Table 1). The lesson format was examined for consistency throughout the series and among the series.

The planning suggestions for each of the series followed a similar format. Each series started the planning by activating prior knowledge. They included plans for oral and written responses to the literature. Skills instruction was a part of each planner; but it did not dominate the lesson. Each series provided for children with special needs within the planning outline. Multicultural perspectives were incorporated in each planning outline.

The planning provided a variety of choices to empower the

Table 1
Approximate Lesson Headings and Subheadings in four Basal Series

HBJ	HM	MM	SF
1. Reading Literature a. Building backround b. Vocabulary strategies c. Strategic reading d. Options for reading 2. Responding to Literature a. Story follow-up b. Summarize literature c. Appreciate literature d. Critical thinking critera 3. Learning through Literature a. Introduction of skills b. Review skills	1. Building Backround a. Activate prior knowledge b. Language development concept c. Develop selection vocabulary d. Optional meet individual needs 2. Read the Literature a. Develop strategic reading b. Recommend way to read selection (whole class, teacher guide) c. Opitional flexible grouping for reading 3. Respond to Literature a. Personal responses b. Literature discussion circle c. Creative response d. Optional comprehension support 4. Comprehension 5. Explore, Extend and Share Literature a. Creative thinking b. Spelling c. Literary awareness d. Dramatic awareness e. Study skills 6. Sharing/Ongoing Theme Activities a. Independent reading and writing b. Theme project c. Writing center	1. Prereading Strategies a. Preview b. Evaluate prior knowledge c. Build backround d. Introduce selection 2. Choice for Reading a. Interactive reading b. Independent reading c. Literacy support 3. Reflecting and Responding a. Decoding and phonics b. Book talk c. Writer's choice d. Sum it up 4. Meet Individual Needs a. Activities and strategies	1. Engage a. Prior knowledge b. Vocabulary strategies 2. Read a. Supported reading 3. Respond a. Activity options 4. Explore a. Comprehension workshop b. Decoding workshop c. Language workshop d. Writing-reading opportunity 5. Bridge a. Build mulit-cultural understanding b. Individual reading

teacher and the student. Suggestions for activities, projects, and personal responses are numerous and varied.

There are suggestions for whole class, small and cooperative group settings and independent learning activities. Flexible grouping is encouraged and allows for an integrated learning experience.

The study by Hudak-Huelbig et al. (1991) found lessons to be structured as "Directed Reading Activities", a step-by-step process which involves preparation, reading and follow up activities under teacher guidance (Wepner & Feeley, 1993). The present basal reading series provide more strategic reading modeling accompanied by suggestions for independent reading. Modeling of strategic reading involves the teacher showing the students various ways to construct meaning as they read. The student may predict, correct if necessary, confirm, and integrate meaning (Weaver, 1988) by looking up an unfamiliar word, asking someone, sounding it out, skipping it or relating it to a familiar word or any combination of these depending on the given situation.

Question 4: How do the Scope and Sequence Charts compare?

To determine the kinds of skills and number of skills presented in the four teacher's manuals, the Scope and Sequence Charts were examined for common skills. Skills were categorized,

counted and complied into tables. Seven main skill headings were found to be consistent throughout the four reading series. They are Decoding and Phonics, Vocabulary, Comprehension, Study Skills, Literary Appreciation, Language/Writing, and Strategic Reading. Subskills for each of these classifications were counted. The results were scrutinized to determine if the subskills were common to one, some or all of the basal series.

All four basal teacher's manuals contained a scope and sequence chart. All of the charts provide an overview of the skills presented throughout the basal series. The seven common skill areas were chosen for examination. Skills not related to these seven major categories were placed in an "OTHER" category.

Table 2 indicates the number of skills from the scope and sequence charts for the first reader in four basal series. There is a wide disparity between SF with a low of 85 skills, compared to MM with a high of 141 skills. There appears to be an increase in the number of skills in the recent additions compared to the Hudak-Huelbig et al. (1991) study. The increase may be attributed to the large number of strategic reading, language/writing, and literary appreciation skills that were not evident in the previous study.

Table 3 shows the number of skills for the fourth grade in the four basal series. At the fourth grade level there is a difference of 46 skills between the highest number of 141 (MM)

Table 2

Number of Skills for the First Reader, Grade 1, in Four Basal Series from Scope And Sequence

Skills	Basals				
	SF	HBJ	HM	MM	% of Basals
Decoding and Phonics	11	12	19	10	4
Vocabulary	5	6	8	10	4
Comprehension	10	11	13	21	4
Study Skills	8	8	11	8	4
Literary Appreciation	17	22	14	8	4
Language/Writing	21	13	10	41	4
Strategic Reading	13	9	24	11	4
Other	0	24	0	32	2
Total	85	123	99	141	

Table 3
Number of Skills for Fourth Grade in Four Basal Series
From Scope and Sequence

Skills	Basals				
	SF	HBJ	HM	MM	# of Basals
Decoding and Phonics	5	9	21	-	3
Vocabulary	9	10	7	12	4
Comprehension	-	15	15	25	3
Study Skills	14	12	19	11	4
Literary Appreciation	22	33	16	8	4
Language/Writing	23	14	10	46	4
Strategic Reading	13	9	31	11	4
Other	9	29	0	28	4
Total	95	131	119	141	

and the lowest number of 95 (SF). With the exception of SF, these numbers are higher than the previous study (Hudak-Huelbig et al., 1991). Just as at the first grade level, there appears to be a high concentration of skills for literary appreciation, language/writing, and strategic reading. These classifications were not a part of the previous study and may account for the higher number of total skills being found. It seems unusual that SF recorded no comprehension skills at the fourth grade level. It is believed that these skills have been replaced with strategic reading skills. A concentration of comprehension skills can be found in the other three basal series.

The number of skills in each publisher's first and fourth grade readers corresponded to the numbers in the scope and sequence charts.

Discussion will now turn to the subskills found under the main headings of Decoding and Phonics, Vocabulary, Comprehension, Study Skills, Literary Appreciation, Language/Writing, and Strategic Reading.

Decoding and Phonics

Table 4 indicates the decoding and phonics skills for the first reader in four basal series. There are a total of 19 subskills included. Phonograms, short and long vowels, and consonant clusters were covered in all four basals. Consonant

Table 4

Decoding and Phonics Skills for the First Reader, Grade 1, in Four Basal Series

Skills	Basals				
	SF	HM	HBJ	MM	# of Basals
Oral Language	-	1	-	-	1
Picture clues	-	1	-	-	1
Printed Language	-	1	-	1	2
Context plus phonics	-	1	1	1	3
Structural analysis	-	1	1	-	2
Initial/Final consona	1	2	1	-	3
Phonagrams	1	1	1	3	4
Short vowels	1	1	1	1	4
Long vowels	1	1	1	1	4
Consonant clusters	1	1	1	1	4
Consonant digraphs	-	1	1	1	3
Vowel pairs	1	1	-	-	2
Base words	1	1	-	-	2
Inflected forms	1	1	1	-	3
Contractions	1	1	1	-	3
Compound Words	1	1	1	-	3
Sylllabacation	-	1	-	1	2
Prefix/suffix	1	1	-	-	1
r-controlled vowels	-	-	1	-	1
Total	11	19	12	10	

digraphs, inflectional endings, contractions and compound words appeared in three of the four series.

It is obvious from the results that there is a strong emphasis on decoding and phonics skills at the first reader level.

Table 5 identifies the 20 decoding and phonics skills for the fourth grade readers. None of the skills are covered in all four of the basals. In the fourth grade level there seems to be more agreement among the publishers on compound words, syllabication, prefix/suffix, and Greek/Latin roots. These skills are listed in three of the four series. While many decoding and phonics skills are listed at the fourth grade level, they are widely dispersed among the basals.

Comparing these findings to those of Hudak-Huelbig et al. (1991), we found that HM shows a significant increase in the amount of decoding and phonics skills. Five subskills were listed in the 1991 study, 21 skills appear in the present study. SF has cut in half the number of decoding and phonics skills since the first study. HBJ has remained the same while MM places these subskills in the category of strategic reading.

Vocabulary

Table 6 lists the vocabulary skills found in the first

Table 5
Decoding And Phonics For Fourth Grade
in Four Basal Series

Skill	Basals				
	SF	HBJ	HM	MM	# of Basals
Oral Language	-	-	1	-	1
Picture clues	-	-	1	-	1
Printed language	-	-	1	-	1
Context/ Phonics	-	1	2	-	2
IN. and Fin. Con.	-	-	2	-	1
Phonograms	-	1	1	-	2
Short Vowels	-	-	1	-	1
Long Vowels	-	-	1	-	1
Consonant Clusters	-	-	1	-	1
Consonant Digraphs	-	-	1	-	1
Vowel Pairs	-	-	1	-	1
Base Words	-	-	1	-	1
Inflected Forms	-	1	1	-	2
Contractions	-	1	1	-	2
Compound Words	1	1	1	-	3
Syllabication	1	1	1	-	3
Prefix/ suffix	1	1	1	-	3
Greek/Latin Roots	1	1	2	-	3
Possessive, comparative, superlative	-	1	-	-	1
Root Words	1	-	-	-	1
Total	5	9	21	0	

Table 6
First Grade Vocabulary for Four Basal Series

Skills	Basals				
	SF	HBJ	HM	MM	# of Basals
Classifies	1	1	1	-	3
Synonyms/Antonyms	-	1	1	1	3
Connotation	-	1	1	-	2
Sel. Vocabulary	-	-	1	1	2
Voc. Expansion	-	-	-	1	1
Voc. Strategies	-	1	1	1	3
Inflectional Endings	1	1	1	1	4
Plurals	2	-	-	1	2
Compound Words	1	-	-	1	2
Contractions	-	-	-	1	1
Possessives	-	-	-	1	1
Categorizes	-	1	2	1	3
Total	5	6	8	10	

reader in four basal series. There are a total of 13 skills addressed. The skills found most frequently are categorization, vocabulary expansion, and vocabulary strategies. Classification and synonyms/antonyms are addressed in three of the four series. HM and MM have doubled the amount of vocabulary skills since the last study (Hudak-Huelbig et al., 1991). The other series remain consistent with the previous findings.

Table 7 identifies 13 vocabulary skills addressed in the fourth grade readers. Synonyms/antonyms and homonyms/homophones are found in all four series. Homographs, developing selection vocabulary, vocabulary expansion, vocabulary strategies, and analogies appear in three of the four series. These numbers are consistent with the 1991 findings. MM and HM show a slight increase in the number of skills to be covered in grade four.

Comprehension

Table 8 lists the comprehension skills found in the first reader in four basal series. Twenty skills are identified. None of the skills are found in all four series. Drawing conclusions, inferencing, main idea, details, predicting outcome, sequencing, cause and effect, and summarizing are common to three of the four series. Since the 1991 study (Hudak-Huelbig et al.), MM has increased the number of comprehension skills by nine. The other publishers remain consistent with the 1991 findings.

Table 7
Vocabulary Skills Fourth Grade Reader

Skills	Basals					
	SF	HBJ	HM	MM	# of Basals	
Categorizes	-	-	1	-	1	
Classifies	-	-	1	-	1	
Synonyms/Antonyms	1	1	1	1	4	
Homographs	-	1	1	1	3	
Hononyms/Homophones	1	1	1	1	4	
Connotation/Denotation	-	1	-	1	2	
Developing Sel. Voc.	1	1	1	-	3	
Vocabulary Expansion	4	-	1	2	3	
Context Clues	-	1	-	-	1	
Vocab. Strategy	1	1	-	4	3	
Analogies	1	1	-	1	3	
Glossary	-	1	-	-	1	
Dictionary/Word Meaning	-	1	-	1	2	
Total	9	10	7	12		

Table 8
First Grade Comprehension Skills For Four Basal Series

Skills	Basals				
	SF	HBJ	HM	MM	# of Basals
Classify/Categorize	-	1	-	1	2
Compare/contrast	-	-	1	1	2
Draw Conclusions	-	1	1	1	3
Fact/Opinion	-	-	-	1	1
Fantasy/Realism	-	-	1	1	2
Follow Directions	-	-	2	-	1
Inferencing	-	1	1	1	3
Main Idea	-	1	1	1	3
Details	-	1	1	1	3
Outcome	-	1	1	1	3
Sequence	-	1	1	2	3
Summarizing	-	1	2	1	3
Viewpoint	-	1	-	2	2
Referents	-	1	-	-	1
Generalizations	-	-	-	1	1
Conventions of Print	10	-	-	1	1
Predictions	-	-	-	2	1
Genre	-	-	-	1	1
Spatial relations	-	-	-	1	1
Cause/Effect	-	1	1	1	3
Total	10	11	13	21	

Table 9 displays the 19 comprehension skills in the fourth grade readers. None of the skills were found in all four of the series but half the skills were found in three of the series.

No skills are listed under comprehension for SF. These skills can be found under strategic reading. MM has increased the total number of comprehension skills since the Hudak-Huelbig et al. 1991 study. The other series remain consistent with the 1991 findings.

Unlike the 1991 findings in which comprehension was more emphasized in grade four, comprehension skills were equally emphasized at the first and fourth grade levels.

Study Skills

Table 10 shows the study skills included in the first readers in the four basal reading series. A total of 12 skills appeared in the four basal reading series. Emphasis is placed on alphabetical order, glossary/dictionary understanding, the use of graphic aids, following directions, test taking strategies, and understanding parts of the book. HM is the only series to show a significant increase in the number of study skills since the Hudak-Huelbig et al.(1991) study.

It was noticed that many of the subskills recorded in the 1991 study are the same study skills in this present study.

Table 9

Comprehension for Fourth Grade in Four Basal Readers

Skills	Basals				
	SF	HBJ	HM	MM	# of Basals
Cause/Effect	-	1	1	1	3
Categorize/Classify	-	1	1	1	3
Compare/Contrast	-	1	1	1	3
Draw Conclusions	-	1	1	4	3
Fact/Opinion	-	1	1	3	3
Fantasy/Realism	-	1	1	2	3
Follows direction	-	-	1	-	1
Inferencing	-	-	1	1	2
Main Idea	-	1	1	1	3
Details	-	-	1	-	1
Predicting Outcomes	-	1	1	2	3
Sequence	-	1	1	2	3
Summarize	-	2	1	1	3
Story Organization	-	-	1	1	2
Text Organization	-	-	1	2	2
Author's Purpose	-	1	-	1	2
Generalizations	-	1	-	1	2
Judgements	-	1	-	1	2
Referents	-	1	-	1	1
Total	0	15	15	25	

TABLE 10

Study Skills for First Reader, Grade 1, in Four Basal Series

Skills	Basals				
	SF	HM	HBJ	MM	# of Basals
ABC Order	1	1	1	1	4
Glossary/dictionary	1	1	1	1	4
Graphic aids	2	2	1	1	4
Literary Skills	-	1	1	1	3
Direction	1	1	1	1	4
Classify/categorize	-	1	-	-	1
Rate of reading	-	1	-	-	1
Test taking strategies	1	1	1	1	4
Book parts	1	1	1	1	4
Outlining/notetaking	1	1	-	-	2
Self-assessment	-	-	1	-	1
Forms/applications	-	-	-	1	1
Total	8	11	8	8	

Table 11 shows 17 study skills from the basals' fourth grade scope and sequence charts. In addition to those skills stressed, at the first grade, notetaking and outlining have been included at the fourth grade level as areas of focus. The remainder of the skills appear in one or some of the basal series. The number of skills in each series ranges from a low of 11 to a high of 19. The number of study skills found are comparable to those in the study by Hudak-Huelbig et al. (1991).

Three skills areas appeared in all four basal series that were not evident in the study by Hudak-Huelbig et al. (1991). These categories include literary appreciation, language/writing, and strategic reading. It appears that these categories were specifically created to accommodate the trends of the whole-language movement. These exercises stress strategy building rather than discrete skills. For lack of better placement they can be found in the scope and sequence of skill development.

Literary Appreciation

Table 12 displays the literary appreciation skills found in the first reader of the four basal series. Seventeen skills are listed. The majority of skills are dispersed among all four reading series. The only common concentration of skills includes, literary elements, dramatization, and following directions.

A disparity exists between the total number of literary

Table 11

Study Skills for Fourth Grades in Four Basal Series

Skills Basals

	SF	HBJ	HM	MM	# of Basals
Alphabetical Order	-	-	1	1	2
References	-	1	3	-	2
Graphic Aids	4	1	2	1	4
Parts of Book	1	1	1	1	4
Library skills	5	1	1	-	3
Follow Directions	1	1	1	1	4
Categorize/Classify	-	1	1	-	2
Text Organization	1	-	1	1	3
Rate of reading	-	1	1	-	2
Note Taking/Outlining	1	1	2	1	4
Synthesizing	-	-	1	-	1
Report writing	-	-	1	-	1
Summarizing	-	-	1	-	1
Study Strategies	-	1	1	1	3
Test Taking Strategies	1	1	1	1	4
Content Area Reading	-	1	-	2	2
Forms/Applications	-	1	-	1	2
Total	14	12	19	11	

Table 12

Literary Appreciation Skills In Firs. Grade For Four Basal Series

Skills	Basals				
	SF	HBJ	HM	MM	# of Basals
Fantasy	5	1	1	-	3
Realistic	1	1	1	-	3
Nonfiction	2	-	1	-	2
Poetry	1	1	1	-	3
Folklore	-	1	1	-	2
Biography	-	1	-	-	1
Historical Fiction	-	-	-	-	0
Content Area Reading	-	3	1	-	2
Literary Elements	5	8	1	2	4
Drama	1	1	1	1	4
Journals	-	1	1	1	3
Essay	-	1	-	-	1
Informational Article	-	1	1	-	2
Directions	1	1	1	1	4
Interview	-	1	-	-	1
Speech	-	-	1	-	1
Song	1	-	1	-	2
Personal Interest	-	-	1	3	2
Total	17	22	14	8	

appreciation skills. They range from a low of 8 in MM to a high of 22 in HBJ. It would seem that some series are placing more emphasis on literary appreciation than others. SF and HBJ have placed a heavy emphasis on literary elements.

Table 13 shows the 11 literary appreciation skills from the basals' fourth grade scope and sequence charts. At the fourth grade level literary appreciation skills are more sophisticated than at the first grade level. It is interesting to note that SF and MM have placed all skill development in genre and personal interest areas respectively. The other publishers have dispersed these skills into many more classifications. Again a wide gap appears among the number of skills. MM lists 8 skills while HBJ shows 33 skills. HBJ and SF had the highest number of related literary skills in both the first and fourth reader, while HM and MM had the lowest in both grades.

Language and Writing

Table 14 indicates the nine skills included for the first grade level. Two areas, writing process and narrative writing were common to all four basals. The concentration of skills varied greatly. MM listed 16 skills under writing process, while HBJ recorded only 3. Eighteen skills related to writing forms were found for MM while no skills under this category appeared in the other three basals. There also appeared a wide range in the total number of skills. With HM listing 10 and MM showing 41.

Table 13
Literary Appreciation For Fourth Grade in Four Basal Series

Skills	Basals				
	SF	HBJ	HM	MM	# Of Basals
Genre	22	19	7	-	3
Content Area Reading	-	-	1	-	1
Figurative Language	-	1	1	-	2
Sound Devices	-	1	3	-	2
Characterization	-	1	-	-	1
Imagery	-	1	1	-	2
Mood/Tone	-	1	-	-	1
Exageration	-	-	1	-	1
Idioms	-	-	1	-	1
Literary Elements	-	9	1	-	2
Personal Interest/Attitudes	-	-	-	8	1
Total	22	33	16	8	

Table 14

First Grade Language/Writing for Four Basal Series

	SF	HBJ	HM	MM	# of Basals
Writing Process	10	3	5	16	4
Writer's Craft	6	2	-	5	3
Expository Writing	1	2	2	-	3
Narrative	1	1	1	1	4
Descriptive	2	2	1	-	3
Persuasive	-	1	1	-	2
Content Area Writing	1	2	-	-	2
Audience	-	-	-	1	1
Writing Forms	-	-	-	18	1
Total	21	13	10	41	

Table 15 indicates five language/writing skills in the fourth grade basal series. The skills are more evenly divided at the fourth grade level. Most of the skills appear in the majority of the basal series. Again MM places heavy emphasis on forms of writing as seen at the first grade level. MM also places a strong emphasis on skills revision at the fourth grade level. As at the first grade level, there is a wide gap between MM with 46 total skills and HM with only 10 listed skills for this area.

It is obvious that MM and SF are placing a heavy emphasis on the reading/writing connection at both the first and fourth grade level.

Strategic Reading

Table 16 shows the strategic reading skills at the first grade level in all four basal series. There are 20 skills listed. Preview and predict, self-question, stop and think, summarizing, and critical reading strategies seems to play an important part in three of the four series demonstrated by a high concentration of skills. HM shows a high of 24 total skills with HBJ listing only 9.

Table 17 indicates the strategic reading skills for the basal series at the fourth grade level. None of the skills are found in all four basals. Preview/self-question, stop and think, summarizing and critical reading/thinking appear in three of the

Table 15
Fourth Grade Language And Writing in Four Basal Series

Skills	Basals				
	SF	HBJ	HM	MM	# of Basals
Writing Process	5	1	5	4	4
Writer's Craft	3	3	-	5	3
Forms of Writing	8	5	5	23	4
Skills Revision	1	5	-	14	3
Responses to Lit.	6	-	-	-	1
Totals	23	14	10	46	

Table 16

First Grade Strategic Reading in Four Basal Series

Skills	Basals				
	SF	HBJ	HM	MM	# of Basals
Reading new words	-	1	1	-	2
Preview and Predict	3	1	1	1	4
Story Map Predictions	-	-	1	-	1
Self-question	1	1	1	1	4
Stop and Think	1	1	1	1	4
Reread	-	-	1	2	2
Read Ahead	-	1	1	-	1
Reading Rate	-	1	1	1	2
Skim,Scan	-	1	1	-	1
Summarizing	2	1	2	1	4
K-W-L	-	1	1	-	1
Critical reading	2	3	3	1	4
Self-assessment	1	1	-	-	2
Generate questions	-	-	1	1	2
Response	-	-	3	-	1
Genre	-	-	2	-	1
Literary Elements	1	-	2	1	3
Analyze Text	1	-	-	-	1
Inferences	1	-	-	-	1
Set Purposes	-	-	-	1	1
Total	13	9	24	11	

Table 17
Strategic reading At Fourth Grade in Four Basal Series

Skills	Basals				
	SF	HBJ	HM	MM	#of Basals
Story Mapping	-	2	3	-	2
Self-questioning	6	-	3	3	3
Stop/Think	-	1	3	6	3
Reading Rate	-	-	1	1	2
Skim/Scan	-	-	1	-	1
Summarizing	1	1	5	-	3
K-W-L	-	1	1	-	2
Critical reading	6	-	5	1	3
Dramatazation	-	-	2	-	1
Fiction	-	1	1	-	2
Nonfiction	-	1	1	-	2
Compare/Contrast	-	1	1	-	2
Details	-	1	1	-	2
Point of View	-	-	1	-	1
Author Qualification	-	-	1	-	1
Fact/Opinion	-	-	1	-	1
Total	13	9	31	11	

four basals. Both SF and HM list a concentration of skills for critical reading and thinking. SF shows a high concentration of skills in previewing and self questioning, MM stresses stop and think and HM emphasizes summarizing skills. As at the first grade level HM lists a high number of skills (31) while HBJ lists only 9 skills under strategic reading.

It is obvious from these findings that publishers have moved towards more strategy building activities. At the fourth grade level there are more metacomprehension strategies listed than in all other skill areas combined. At the first grade level it is obvious that metacomprehension strategies are a strong component of the program. While there are approximately 50 more skills in the first four categories, it appears that this kind of skill work is expected at first grade to balance the skills and metacomprehension strategies. The basals appear to be reflecting more of an interactive reading model. In the "interactive process the bottom-up and top-down processes occur simultaneously and meaning results from the interaction between the reader and the text" (Lipson & Wixson, 1991, p. 11).

Question 5: How does the amount of skill work compare with the number of pages of coherent reading and how related are skill sheets to the text?

To compare the amount of skill work to the amount of coherent reading the pages in the student anthology, student

practice books, journals, and integrated spelling programs were totaled for the first and last stories. The number of pages of student coherent reading was compared to the number of pages spent on skill practice. The numbers were converted into percentages and can be found on Figure 5. The objectives for the first and last story were examined. The skill was considered related if it was stated in one of the objectives, skills not mentioned in the objectives were considered unrelated (results found in tables 18 & 19).

Independent reading of authentic literature promotes lifetime reading habits (Sanacore, 1992). Children learn to read by reading not by doing skill practice sheets from a workbook. Skills are learned and integrated into our schema as we read. Making predictions and testing them results in self-monitoring as one reads, and as one self-monitors more learning takes place (Smith, 1985).

Figure 6 shows the percentage of pages devoted to reading and skill work in four basal series.

In the first grade readers HBJ, SF, and MM devote more pages to on task reading than skill work. HM is the only publisher with a disproportionate amount of skill pages. The amount of coherent reading varies from a high of 80% (SF) to a low of 39% (HM). HBJ and MM approached the 50% mark of half coherent reading and half skills development. SF is perhaps the

Figure 5
The Percentage of
Coherent Reading to Skill
Work in the First Reader

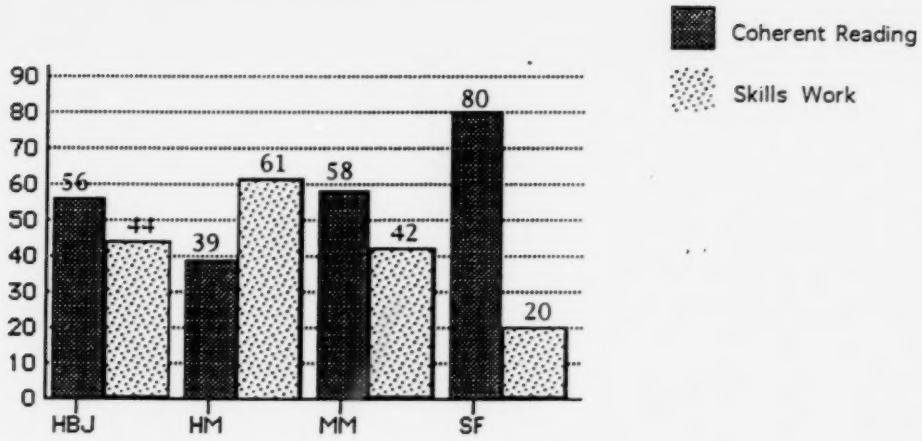


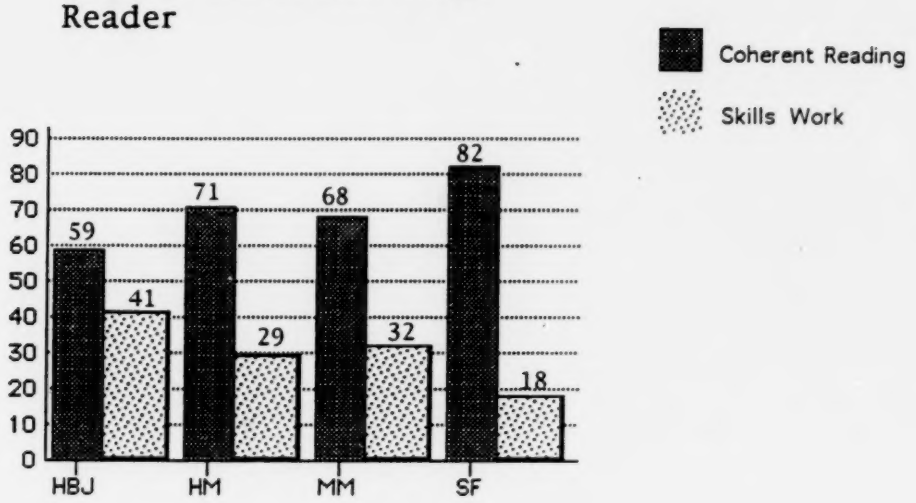
Table 18
Related and Unrelated Skills Pages For Two Sample Stories in First Reader

	SF		HBJ		HM		MM	
Phonics/ Decoding	7	0	3	0	11	4	12	0
Vocabulary	1	0	8	2	5	2	6	1
Comprehension	1	0	4	2	4	2	13	1
Study Skills	1	0	0	2	0	0	0	1
	R	U	R	U	R	U	R	U

Table 19
Related and Unrelated Skills Pages for Two Sample Stories for the Fourth Reader

	SF		HBJ		HM		MM	
Phonics/ Decoding	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	0
Vocabulary	4	0	3	0	6	2	4	2
Comprehension	2	0	0	0	4	1	7	1
Study Skills	0	0	7	2	1	0	0	0
	R	U	R	U	R	U	R	U

Figure 6
The Percentage of Coherent Reading to Skills Work in the Fourth Grade Reader



most consistent with whole language practices, with students engaged in coherent reading 80% of the time.

Since the 1991 study (Hudak-Huelbig et al.) , the amount of coherent reading to skill sheets has remained exactly the same for MM. HBJ has shifted the proportion with coherent reading out numbering skill sheets. No further comparison is able to be made as the percentages for SF and HM were not included in the 1991 study.

In all of the four basal series at the fourth grade there is a higher number of text pages compared to skill pages (see Figure 6). As at the first grade level SF has over 80% of coherent reading compared to 18% skill work. HM follows closely behind. Since the 1991 study by Hudak-Huelbig et al., MM and HBJ have slightly increased the number of pages of coherent reading as the number of skill sheets has decreased.

Comparing present percentages for the first and fourth grades HM nearly doubles the amount of coherent reading at the fourth grade level. MM increases the amount of coherent reading by 10 percentage points while SF and HBJ remain consistent at both grades.

It is apparent from these findings that there is a move by publishers towards actively engaging students in reading experiences.

Another significant factor is the relationship of the skill work to the text. Tables 18 & 19 show the types of related and unrelated skillwork found in the two sample stories in the four basal series. The major skill areas looked at are decoding and phonics, vocabulary, comprehension, and study skills.

At the first grade level it was determined that all skill work was related to the text in SF. For all four publishers the number of skill work related to the text was greater than the number of skill work unrelated to the text. SF, HM, and MM place a major emphasis on phonics and decoding. MM also places emphasis on comprehension in the two sampled stories. There was a wide range in the number of skills addressed. In the sample stories, SF had students doing a total of 10 skill sheets while MM had a high of 33 skill sheets. These numbers hold true of findings reported in Table 2.

At the fourth grade level it was determined that all skill work was related to the text for SF. All four publishers place an emphasis on vocabulary at this level. HBJ also appeared to place an emphasis on study skill, while MM focused more on comprehension. Fewer skills were present in these four areas at the fourth reader compared to the first grade level. HBJ had the highest number of skills at 15 and SF had a low of 6 skills. By the fourth grade level, more emphasis seems to be placed on strategic reading and writing activities (see Table 3). Since the 1991 study (Hudak-Huelbig et al.) there has been a significant

decrease in the amount of skill work unrelated to the text. More time is being spent on coherent reading than on skill pages. It would appear that publishers are beginning to offer more active reading experiences and less time on skill development. It would be hoped that future editions would continue the trend toward more coherent reading and less skill emphasis.

Question 6: How are the publishers treating assessment in recent editions?

The forward to each Teacher's Manual was examined to determine the publisher's philosophy on assessment. The listing of components was viewed to determine if the assessment tools were a separate component of the program or a part of the Teacher's Manual. Finally, lessons in the Teacher's Manual were examined for inclusion of assessment activities. HM was the only publisher that provided a sample assessment component of the program for our review.

After examining the forward of each Teacher's Manual it was determined that each publisher placed an emphasis on performance-based assessment. Each publisher provides suggestions for the inclusion of a portfolio. In the side notes of each lesson in the four basal series various suggestions for reading and writing assessment were included.

The current philosophy of assessment is that it should be an

ongoing natural part of the reading and writing process (Routman, 1991). All publishers agreed student evaluation needed to be determined in a meaningful context, whether formal or informal. With this in mind publishers are providing teacher annotations to assess students before, during and after the reading and writing process. It was determined by this review that the more formal assessment components could be as easily managed by the teacher through teacher observation, writing samples, and literature responses. While the HM Teacher Evaluation Booklet is a convenience these same kind of activities could be teacher generated.

Conclusions

To determine the similarities and differences in four basal series the following components were examined: the source of literature, lesson structure, scope and sequence, strategic reading and assessment. The major conclusions follow.

At the first and fourth grade readers the majority of the stories were authentic literature. Publishers seem to be headed in the direction of a whole language philosophy. Each publisher includes numerous activities and projects to enhance the reading and writing process.

Teacher's Manuals remain voluminous but are less directive

than in the past. The Teacher's Manuals provide more strategy building options for teacher choice. At the primary level the lessons include a Shared Reading format. Basal series today provide for critical thinking and problem solving experiences. In each of the series, selections are arranged in themes. Themes varied from publisher to publisher.

The amount of time spent on skill pages has decreased since 1991 (Hudak-Huelbig et al.). While more coherent reading is taking place it still appears that an inordinate amount of time is devoted to skills. Coherent reading needs to be given more time at the first grade level. "Children do not need nonsense in order to learn to read; they need to read" (Smith, 1985, p.116). Fourth grade students tend to spend more time on coherent reading, generally speaking two times as much on coherent reading than on skill development. Also, a significant change has occurred in the relatedness of skill work to text: the skills sheets done by students are currently more related than unrelated to what they read.

It would appear that basal publishers continue to lag behind current research. The fact that scope and sequence charts are still included in the programs indicates a lack of understanding as to how children learn to read and write. When schools or teachers rely on the scope and sequence charts of the basal programs to dictate the reading program, the basal is setting the purpose for reading not the learner or the teacher. The basal is

controlling the learning instead of the learner taking control (metacognition). Learning needs to become the property of the learner not the basal program (Goodman et al. 1988).

It is good to see that a strong emphasis by all publishers is placed on strategic reading. The number of strategic reading skills are almost equal to the number of all other skills in the four basal series. The reading and writing connection is obviously valued in current editions as evidenced by the number of language and writing skills.

Assessment tools in the four basal series seem consistent with evaluation practices of process learning (Feeley, Strickland, Wepner, Eds., 1991). A performance-based portfolio is suggested in each series. Checklists, observation forms, writing samples and literature responses are encouraged by each of the publishers. All four publishers agree that assessment should be a natural ongoing process.

Recommendations: Guidelines for Basal Selection

After careful examination of four basal series, we became aware that selecting commercially produced reading materials should be a well thought out process. Accordingly, we offer as recommendations the following guidelines for schools and districts to consider when selecting a new basal for their

students:

1. Form a committee of teachers, administrators and parents to assess literacy expectations and materials selection. This committee would be responsible for drafting a mission statement on literacy development. This would require examining current research on how children learn to read and write coupled with the experience and expertise of the teaching community. Decide if a basal program fits into your literacy curriculum.
2. Obtain materials for previewing from basal publishers and trade book vendors.
3. In basal consideration look beyond the packaging to see if authentic literature written by well known authors is being used.
4. Look at the teacher's manual for actual usefulness and practicality.
5. Look at lesson structure. Does it reflect your philosophy and current research?
6. To determine the amount of coherent reading compare the number of text pages to practice pages. View the practice pages to determine if the skills are related. Also look to see if the practice activities can be done by students independently.
7. Look closely to see if assessment measures are testing oriented or performance-based.
8. Select components judicially; choose only those needed for your program. You may determine many of the materials can be teacher generated. Check to see if trade books can be purchased less expensively through book clubs instead of the publishers

themselves.

9. Pilot your final two choices to see which works best for you and your school. Teachers need to share their findings on the advantages and disadvantages of the piloted programs.

10. Findings of the committee should be shared with the community at large. Evaluation of the materials and recommendations for improvement of the program should be an ongoing process.

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APPENDIX

A Profile of the Houghton Mifflin Reading Series

The Houghton Mifflin program consists of eight reading levels. There are two reading anthologies at the Kindergarten level and five books at the first grade level. There are two books each for the second and third grades. One student anthology is used at levels four through eight.

A total of nineteen resources are available with the program. The basic components include the Student Anthology, the Teacher's Manual, Journal, Student Resource Book, and Spelling for Writing. Big books for shared reading are available at the Kindergarten and preprimer levels. Standard size books are recommended for student use. Independent theme related paperbacks providing vocabulary practice and reading fluency can be purchased at the Kindergarten through preprimer levels. Read Along Tapes of the Big Book selections are available on audio cassette. Full length paperbacks for theme related independent reading are available in levels 1 through 8. Instruction charts, transparencies, blackline masters, activity cards, staff development videos, a Teacher's Resource Notebook, and assessment materials round out the full complement of available resources. A technology program is recommended for student use.

Basal Series and Sample Stories from the Beginning and End of Student Anthologies.

Houghton Mifflin, The Literature Experience. (1993).
First Reader: Bookworm. "Jimmy Lee Did It" by Pat Cummings, "Anna's Secret Friend" by Yoriko Tsutsui.
Fourth Reader: Dinosauring. "The Boy of the Three-Year Nap" by Dianne Snyder, "Chasing After Annie" by Marjorie Weinman Sharmat.

A Profile of the Harcourt Brace Jovanovich Reading Series

There are numerous literature components, 31 in all, available for the Harcourt Brace Jovanovich (HBJ) basal series. At the Kindergarten level the Core Kit includes Big Books, Theme Books, Read-Aloud Anthology, Literature Posters, Music Cassettes, Picture/Word Cards, Teacher's Editions (Volumes 1 and 2), and The Treasure Tree Assessment. Available separately are Treasures to Share: An HBJ Library, Little Books, and Big Book Literature Cassette Collection. (Teacher's manual HBJ Treasury Of Literature (1993))

There are a total of six books at the first grade level and one book each for grades 2 through 8. Along with the Student Anthologies available in grades 1-8 there are Big Books and Cassettes of these anthologies available at grades 1-3. Cassettes are also for use with the literature selection for grades 1-8

along with a classroom library of related trade books according to the unit themes being studied and authors read throughout grades 1-8. In grades 4-8 additional trade books are available for additional theme based experiences.

For student support the teacher may purchase one or all of the following: a writer's journal, practice books, integrated spelling books and project cards for all grades 1-8.

HBJ has a wide selection of teacher materials from the actual manuals to videotapes for professional development in current reading issues. Also are charts, transparencies, cards and a phonics kit. The only item viewed for this research was the teacher's manual.

Other available materials include items listed under the headings of family activities, assessment choices, technology and second language support.

Basal Series and Sample Stories from the Beginning and End of Student Anthologies.

Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Treasury of Literature. First Reader (1995), Fourth Reader (1993).
First Reader: Hold on Tight, "Peace at Last" by Jill Murphy, "Jamaica's Find" by Jaunita Harill.
Fourth Grade:Feast Your Eyes, "Election Day" by Johanna Hurwitz, "On the Pampas" by Maria Cristina Brusca.

A Profile of the MacMillan/McGraw-Hill Reading Series

The MacMillan/McGraw-Hill (MM) program consists of eight reading levels. The Tell A Story/Sing A Song Kindergarten program includes Little Books, Big Books, a Big Book of Alphabet Rhymes and Chimes, a Big Book of Songs, and a Big Book of Poems. For the teacher this program has a Teacher's Planning Guide, Teacher's Read Aloud Anthology, an A to EZ Handbook: Staff Development Guide, and Homewords a monthly newsletter. Practice is provided through a Literature Activity Book, Pocket Chart Rhymes and Chimes Strips. Two forms of assessment are offered; a Performance Assessment Handbook and an Early Literacy Assessment. Other materials available are Pocket Charts and Stands, ABC Cards, Alphabet Posters, various Books, Songs and Poems on Audio Cassette, Word Masks and Interactive Software.

The materials available for the 1-8 grade levels include Student Anthologies, a Classroom Library, Skills/Strategies Practice Books, Literature Activity Books, Spelling and Handwriting Activity Pads, Literature to Literacy Activity Pads, and Thinking to Read and Write: Strategy Application Take Home Books. Big Books, Big Books Rhymes and Chimes, Phonics Activity books, Phonics and Language Books, and Word Building Kits are available in grades 1-2. Available in grade one only are Little Books, Big Book of Songs and Poems, Pocket Chart Rhymes and

Chimes Strips/Story Strips.

Teacher materials for grades 1-8; Teacher's Planning Guides, Teacher's Read Aloud Anthologies, Teacher's Book of Plays and Choral Readings, Writer's Workshop, Vocabulary Strategy Transparencies and Blackline Masters, Writing Process Transparencies, Strategic Reading and Writing Transparencies and Blackline Masters, A to EZ Handbook: Staff Development Guide, Home Words, Writing Process Posters, and Theme Posters and Mobiles.

Assessment materials included for grades 1-8; Performance Assessment Handbook, Written Response Progress Assessments Blackline Masters or Student Booklets, Multiple Choice Progress Assessment Blackline Masters or Student Booklets, Individual Reading Inventory/Running Record/Decoding and Phonics Inventory, and an Increase Your Testing Power for Standardized Tests. At the first grade level there is a Early Literacy Assessment.

Other additional materials include; Pocket Charts and Stands, Mini Pocket Charts, ABC Cards, an Alphabet Poster, Sing a Sound Audio Cassettes, Song and Story Audio Cassettes, A New View listening library Audio Cassettes, Word Masks, a Computer Management System, and Sights and Sounds Interactive Software.

Basal Series and Sample Stories from the Beginning and End of Student Anthologies.

MacMillan/McGraw-Hill, A New View. (1993).
First Reader: The Very Thing, "Henry and Mudge in Puddle Trouble" by Cynthia Rylant, "A Letter to Amy" by Ezra Jack Keats.
Fourth Reader: Beat the Story Drum, "Mirandy and Brother Wind" by Patricia C. McKissack, "The Stonecutter" by Pam Newton.

A Profile of the Scott Foresman Reading Series

The Scott Foresman Reading Program is an eight level reading series. Each level contains several Student Anthologies. At the first grade level there are six reading anthologies. Each book contains authentic literature, poetry selections, and author or illustrator sketches. Each book contains a variety of genre selections with attention given to multicultural diversity.

A wide variety of materials are available to support the program. The components examined were the Teacher's Guide, Student Projects Books, Student Practice Books, and Integrated Spelling Books. Several other components are available and vary by grade level. At the first grade level, supplementary materials include Big Books and accompanying small books, audiotapes, a phonics manipulatives kit, an independent reading library, an assessment handbook, and a reading skills survey. An alternative

program, The Bridge to Celebrate Reading, is offered to meet individual needs.

The Teacher's Guide is lengthy and contains more suggestions and activities than could be practically implemented. Phonics instruction appeared to be treated as isolated skills and not presented in the context of the total reading and writing program. The Teacher's Guide contains a salient feature not present in the other basal series. Scott Foresman provides a section entitled: **Finding A Starting Point**. This section is a three week thematic unit to provide time for teachers to observe students as readers and writers. Observation checklists are included to record students understanding of the concepts of print.

The Integrated Spelling Program was not examined at all levels. At the first grade level, the spelling book appeared to be a phonics based program drawing from vocabulary of the selections. Most of the activities resembled a traditional worksheet style. It did not seem to emphasize spelling as an integral part of the writing process.

The Project Books contain activities connecting reading and writing. The activities are designed to encourage cooperative learning and problem solving. Many of the activities are worthwhile; but could be accomplished without the standard worksheet. These same activities could be facilitated with the

student creating more of the writing and artwork.

The Practice Book contains a traditional worksheet style to provide skill practice. Most of the tasks require a one word response. Emphasis at the first grade level is on phonics and vocabulary development. This component places an overemphasis on skill and drill practice. Teacher initiated writing experiences would better meet the objectives.

The Teacher's Guide and Student Anthologies provide the best experiences for the developing reader. The other components could easily be teacher initiated and produced.

Basal Series and Sample Stories from the Beginning and End of Student Anthologies.

Scott Foresman, Celebrate Reading. (1993).
First Reader: A Canary with Hiccups, "The Goat Who Couldn't Sneeze" by Cecilia Avalos, "Pizza Time" by James Marshall.
Fourth Reader: Don't Wake the Princess, "Lentil" by Robert McCloskey, The Wolf Is at the Door, "Lon Po Po" by Ed Young.
(There are five books at the fourth grade level in this series).